

Minutes
State Board of Education Study Session
Monday, October 18, 2004

The Arizona State Board of Education held a Study Session at Ironwood Elementary School, 1500 N. Colorado, Casa Grande, AZ. The meeting was called to order at 9:05AM.

Members Present

Ms. Nadine Mathis-Basha, President
Dr. Matthew Diethelm, Vice President
Ms. Armida Bittner
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Dr. John Pedicone

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow
Ms. Evangelina “Conkie” Hoover

Pledge Of Allegiance, Moment Of Silence and Roll Call

1. Opening Comments

Ms. Basha expressed appreciation on behalf of the State Board of Education for Ironwood School’s hospitality and special arrangements for today’s meeting, allowing the State Board to be out in the community.

Dr. Shirley Howell, Principal, Ironwood Elementary School, welcomed the State Board and extended an invitation to visit classrooms. Dr. Howell added that Ironwood is a Reading First School and the students are exactly where they should be at their target score as they work toward the end of the year benchmark.

Mr. Garye Vasquez, President, Governing Board, Casa Grande Elementary School District, welcomed the State Board to the District stating this demonstrates that the Board is open to discussion regarding these important issues.

Mr. Frank Davidson, Superintendent, Casa Grande Elementary School District was also present.

State Board Member, Ms. Joanne Kramer, teacher at Ironwood Elementary School, noted that their teachers would welcome any members who wanted to visit their classrooms.

Ms. Basha asked for Item 5 to be discussed first to accommodate presenters’ schedules.

2. Presentation and Discussion of General State and Federal Laws and Regulations Regarding Testing and High School Graduation.

Ms. Farley provided highlights of the federal, state and Board rule requirements for high school graduation (see materials in packet):

- Federal:
 - Requires states to adopt standards and assess language arts and math and science by the end of the 2006 school year
 - No requirements as to what is needed for high school graduation at the federal level
- State Statute:
 - Board is required to adopt a minimum course of study for high school graduation, which, according to current Board rule, is 20 credit hours:
 - Eleven and one-half credits of prescribed subjects
 - Eight and one-half credits as defined by local districts
 - Board is required to incorporate the academic standards into the competency requirements for reading, writing, math, and social studies
 - Board is required to adopt competency tests in reading, writing and math
 - Effective date for the assessment in order to graduate from high school is 2006 with some exceptions with regard to special education students who are on IEPs.

Additional information will be provided to members during the process.

3. Discussion Regarding the Arizona Academic Standards and the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).

Ms. Farley noted that feedback has been received to date from the field, education association representatives as well as from business members and the next step is today's open dialogue at the Board level. Members were asked to categorize their questions in the following areas:

- Inside the Test
- Inside the School
- AIMS and the Outside World
- Other

Superintendent Horne made the following observations:

- They are expecting to hear from the Attorney General's Office that an excerpt in the rule regarding special education is ineffective as it may violate federal law to reflect that a student is a special education student on their transcript;
- The rule appears to contradict the statute, which requires the student pass the test to graduate;
- Questions are being compiled and will be posted on the web site regarding formative assessment to help students learn and be prepared for the tests;
- About one-half of AIMS tests in each grade level are expected to be released sometime in November;
- The Department is making it a priority to get a large number of questions on the web site to help students/teachers prepare for the AIMS tests;
- The Department is working to make sure the test is a fair measure of the standards; and
- Teachers are assisting in writing all the test questions as well as choosing the field tested items that will be on the test.

Additional comments from Board members were:

Dr. Pedicone:

- The effort that has been done to develop AIMS by the Department
- What is the value of AIMS at the university and/or workplace level?
- Is this the best way to measure student competency?
- What is the promise at the end of the test?
- The issue of only 6 questions making the difference between whether a student is "falls far below", "meets" or "exceeds" the standard is a concern and should be looked at
- Look at a different way of administering the AIMS test, i.e. content clusters, and then focus on what the student is deficient in

Dr. Diethelm:

- AIMS is a measurement instrument
- He would rather see efforts spent on what is being measured and making it easier for teachers to instill the needed knowledge

Ms. Hilde:

- There is no intention to walk away from AIMS
- Could the testing be on a more regular basis rather than one big test at some pivotal point?
- It is appropriate to test around the standards
- It is important to let the public know the purpose of the testing

Ms. Kramer:

- Education is continually improving
- It is important to work up from the early grades since this impacts the later grades

Ms. Bittner:

- How are we going to work with and accommodate the special populations including those with other languages, those in detention, and those who did not receive a basic education in their early years, etc.?

Ms. Basha:

- Need to stay the course and make a good functioning tool to help children
- AIMS is not punitive
- We are striving to do a better job on behalf of Arizona's children

Ms. Farley:

- Invited and/or in attendance today are representatives from:
 - State Assessment Advisory Committee
 - National Assessment Advisory Committee
 - Education Organizations
 - Individuals who attended the September 20 meeting
 - Testing Coordinators
 - Arizona Department of Education staff from the following units:
 - Standards
 - Assessment
 - Accountability

The following questions were submitted by members:

* between “Inside the Test” and “Inside the School”

** between “Inside the School” and “AIMS and the Outside World”

INSIDE THE TEST	INSIDE THE SCHOOL	AIMS AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD
<p>Pedicone: Could we have content clusters in AIMS? Senior year should have an alternative program- eliminate “last year” mentality</p> <p>Basha: What % of test is based on prior knowledge (earlier than 10th grade)?</p> <p>Kramer: Look at the 8th grade test rigor, is it misaligned and are the questions too rigorous *? Are AIMS standards appropriate and does AIMS measure those standards? Do standards align with curriculum?</p> <p>Pedicone: How are six traits writing tests being graded - holistically? How do we equalize writing scores?</p> <p>Basha: For high school kids there are two reviewers for writing, which averages scores.</p> <p>Kramer: Questions are asked at a later time than when the student learned the materials. Answers require recall rather than skill demonstration.</p>	<p>Bittner: How will funding be allocated relative to AIMS scores? What are the criteria and current implications?</p> <p>Basha: What are the characteristics / profiles of schools with low scores and high scores, i.e. size, Title I, underperforming, etc.</p> <p>Diethelm: How well do Arizona teachers and ed leaders understand the methodology required to teach to the standards and where do they go to obtain those skills?</p> <p>Hilde: How do we help the rural schools? Look at the impact of AIMS on special ed students in early grades and high schools. How do we assist/assure small, rural districts with rich data and expertise to utilize this data?</p> <p>Kramer: Could state provide information re: how many points kids are away from passing?</p> <p>Basha: How do we track dropouts due to AIMS? **</p>	<p>Pedicone: What is the promise of AIMS and is it a promise kept? What is its value (predictive value in comparison to SAT and ACT), i.e. better employee, college student, etc.? Special education issue-if no diploma awarded who funds supplemental services until age 22? If they don't get a diploma what are the policy implications and what is the Department's position?</p> <p>Diethelm: How does AIMS compare with other states with high stakes assessment, i.e. depth and breadth of questions?</p> <p>Bittner: Need good public relations re: AIMS itself-whose responsibility (parent, public, board) schools need to work in positive manner.</p> <p>Bittner: If student passed the state test what happens? Should evaluate Arizona tests as they align with other states.</p> <p>Hilde: Keep in constant contact with community colleges.</p>

INSIDE THE TEST	INSIDE THE SCHOOL	AIMS AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD
<p>Hilde: How could educators have a broader view of what will be coming on the test?</p> <p>Kramer: Should do an analysis of the test-any questions left blank more than others, etc.</p> <p>Pedicone: no alignment in tests, strands, six traits and expectations. Need more information on the predicted value of AIMS regarding college success. How are the timelines for writing scored and if the goal is for kids to get better at writing, is the timing effective and should we be testing at different times to maximize effectiveness? *</p>	<p>Pedicone: What do we do with transfer students, etc. and what will state policy be? What about ELLs or students who enter Arizona schools as a sophomore, junior or senior?</p> <p>Diethelm: What's required to have statewide common curricula, lesson plans and classroom assessment for all grades and standards? What workbooks, etc., are available to teachers and students studying for Arizona standards content?</p> <p>Hilde: Do full review of high school requirements from SBE courses-increase or encourage local governing boards</p> <p>Pedicone: Timelines for writing in the schools-are they aligned to test times</p> <p>Basha: Leadership at the school level and results of AIMS-what is correlation and impact.</p> <p>What are the profiles of principals and supt's and governing boards.</p> <p>What resources are available for assistance (education organizations)</p> <p>What does the profile of students look like, i.e. kids that pass the first time, pass after 2-3 times and don't pass</p> <p>Hilde: How can teachers know what is coming on the test-get a "broader" perspective or "enlightened view"?</p>	<p>Hilde: What is message of AIMS passage within college entrance expectations? Can we track students post high school?</p> <p>Kramer: Any longitudinal studies to see if our students are better employees or are better able to handle college curriculum?</p> <p>Basha: What happens to Voc Ed students?</p> <p>Dr. Diethelm reported that the CTE program showed 1% higher than overall state AIMS passage.</p> <p>Bittner: What can AEA, ASBA, Gov. Brds, etc., do to help teachers?</p> <p>Pedicone: How much can SBE do regarding how the test is applied (legally)? Can it be adjusted to get more appropriate results?</p> <p>Hilde: Full review of high school graduation requirements from state board level are they appropriate?</p> <p>ABOR report on student prep for college, community college, and should we increase requirements or encourage local governing boards to do so? Where does the graduation passage rule put special education students?</p>

Additional comments:

Superintendent Horne:

- Regarding alignment between 5th and 8th grade passing rates, this Board will be setting performance standards since the grade levels have been integrated from 3-8. A group of teachers will recommend the cut scores for proficiency. The expectation is that between grades 3 and 8 these will change from what they had been in 1996 because the grades/standards are now aligned and will be more consistent.
- The Department's recommendation for tutoring will be that funding is on a per-pupil basis which will be available to the school.
- State statute doesn't use the word diploma but rather uses the word graduation. The Department interprets it to mean the state's sanctioned diploma. Schools may want to give a certificate of attainment

or achievement that doesn't imply graduation. Board rule does state diploma, however, and because statute says a test must be passed in order to graduate the rule regarding an alternative for special education students appears to be inconsistent with the statute.

- Regarding special education in the early grades the Department is fighting hard to preserve out-of-level testing.

Dr. Donna Lewis, Associate Superintendent, Accountability Division, Arizona Department of Education, referred to a report from "Achieve" regarding high stakes testing in 6 states and suggested we may want to imitate the methodology.

Brief break at 10:50AM. Reconvened at 11:10AM.

4. Discussion of Next Steps Regarding the AIMS Discussion.

Ms. Hilde asked two individuals who have been both in ADE and at a school district:

- This process has come through the formative stage and is now in the implementation stage. What is the biggest surprise and what is most difficult?

Mr. Kelly Powell, Director of Student Achievement, Madison School District:

- At the K-8 level graduation requirements are still theoretical
- The most rigorous AIMS test is the 8th grade math test
- Make sure the measures are as fair and appropriate as possible
- Standards are the curriculum

Dr. Laczko-Kerr, Director of Assessment, Scottsdale Unified School District:

- Now more aware of policy implications at the district level
- District is developing full coursework to meet standards
- Concern is to get data in a timely manner
- Concern about smaller/charter schools regarding the overwhelming amount of information
- Should make data more robust

Dr. Pedicone:

- Never expected to see 100% of kids successful on AIMS
- Always assume certain % won't pass AIMS, and we have to believe all can succeed
- Make sure test isn't in the way
- What is the next step?

Ms. Basha:

- The university team with Dr. Crow will be looking at these issues
- Board leadership will meet in November with the university team
- Another working session will be held with the Board and the team

November 15, 2004 is tentatively set for the next State Board Study Session regarding AIMS.

5. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Proposed System for Allocation of the Tutoring Fund Established Pursuant to A.R.S. 15-241(BB).

Superintendent Horne noted that this item was postponed from the previous Board meeting in an effort to find ways to direct funds toward tutoring students who had failed AIMS in their sophomore year. In other states there have been lawsuits by students who had failed and the states have won those lawsuits. A key factor in those states' victories was that the state intervened and helped those students, proving that those students had opportunities to learn the materials they were being tested on. The Arizona Department of Education's intervention will be a key factor in having the students learn the materials so they can pass and assisting the state's success in a lawsuit. The Tutoring Fund is now \$5.7M and legislation is needed in order to use tutoring funds as outlined. The proposal to award funds under the existing law will be presented at the next State Board of Education meeting and the Legislature will be asked in early January to pass legislation to modify awards

based on student need. The Department is working with WestEd to develop a good program and the hope is it will be passed quickly in legislation.

Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz, Director, Assessment & Standards Development Services, WestEd, described the work that has been done with the Arizona Department of Education and the recommendations for making tutoring funds available to students who have failed AIMS. Dr. Rabinowitz outlined some characteristics of tutoring programs found in their national review as well as the types of interventions that have been discussed with the Arizona Department of Education (see complete presentation in materials packet):

- School can provide service if it is not identified as a failing school;
- Target specific population of students-those likely to fail or be at risk;
- High stakes tests at specific levels for continued grade advancement;
- Prevention/remediation/tutoring programs;
- Tutoring ratio, with the recommendation of 1 to 1 or up to 3-4 to 1 depending on the school's capabilities;
- Private or school-based programs;
- Time spent and timing, i.e. test soon after completion of a program;
- Supplemental service or part of the regular classroom instruction;
- Semester or entire year programs;
- Funding stream; and
- Focus on specific information needed rather than general knowledge.

Dr. Rabinowitz mentioned that changing perspective may be helpful-students don't fail AIMS until the senior year. Prior to that, information could be reported as progress to passing (points to passing). He outlined the following recommendations:

- Supplemental service provided by the school if competency is demonstrated;
- Before or after school instruction;
- Volunteers and/or parents to assist in the instruction;
- Combination of private and public providers that can show evidence of AIMS understanding;
- Demonstrated expertise in small group instruction that helps students in the AIMS target standards;
- Programs must monitor the progress and evaluate results;
- Students would be eligible if they have failed AIMS and are gearing up for the 2005 test;
- Schools that apply to provide instruction must submit information that may include
 - Description of best practices
 - Materials to be used in instruction
 - Credible plan of instructional time
 - Ongoing assessment methods
 - Ability to track student progress giving formative and substantive evaluation
 - How funding is spent and what the success rate is
 - Overall program success

Dr. Rabinowitz listed some characteristics of a recommended evaluation:

- Should be external to the Department or the Board
- Should look at overall program characteristics differentiating successful from unsuccessful
- Should look at how the money is spent and on how many students
- Should look at the success rate at the state, school and provider levels

Further discussion ensued regarding a review process of the potential providers and some programs that have been utilized in other states such as Massachusetts, Delaware, Ohio and others. He noted that the state of Massachusetts spent \$50M in the first year and over time the amount has been reduced to the current \$6.5M per year. He also noted the guiding principles:

- high stakes is more important
- closest to the culminating event as possible is better

- targeted focus around student weakness is critical

Regarding whether all states administer a comprehensive exam each time students were tested, it was noted that Massachusetts gives a narrower re-test, eliminating the advanced category of the test. This is similar to adaptive testing. Dr. Rabinowitz added that this is an interesting concept but not fully recommended.

6. Call to the Public

Mr. Kelly Powell, Director of Student Achievement, Madison School District:

- The Board is moving in the right direction.
- Eager to see released test items.
- Encouraged the Board to look at the reading items for appropriateness.
- In the writing test, the 8th grade scoring should be evaluated. Not an “S curve as would be expected as seen at grades 3 and 5.

Mr. Mike Smith, Arizona School Administrators:

- Looking at what administrators can do at the school level to provide leadership and training.
- Applaud the efforts toward intervention, remediation, and focused training tutorials.
- Struggling with the kids who don’t pass after all these efforts.
 - Who has responsibility and what is it? (state, district, parent, student)

Dr. Ildi Laczko-Kerr, Director of Assessment, Scottsdale Unified School District:

- Need guidance as to whether AIMS information goes on transcripts. If so, what goes on?
- Waiting for information on AIMS DPA. What it looks like, etc. Teachers are anxious to get information.
- Re-testing logistics are a big issue for schools, including space issues. Possible other options (maybe allowing multiple days for testing) would be helpful.
- Timeline for receiving test scores requires a lot of restructuring of student schedules. Getting reading and math scores faster would help.
- Re-testing only students not meeting the standards in the fall test administration is a concern.
- Concerned with 1-to-1 or 3-to-1 ratio for tutoring when districts have several hundred students to remediate.

Maria Frontain, Tucson Life Skills Educator, Flowing Wells High School:

- AIMS-A is a form for special needs students, not really a test. It is 100-200 pages long and teachers do not find it to be useful; questions are ambiguous.
- Suggest using IEP for alternative assessment which is reviewed annually.
- Results of AIMS-A are also subjective; grading is not consistent.

Ms. Michelle Foster, National Board Certified Teacher, Paradise Valley Education Association:

- Concerned about the math tests-data is not comprehensive.
- Math teachers have been unwrapping standards and assessments, but the data received back is not good.
- We now have a 49-question math test which is increasing to 85 questions over two days - this is intimidating.
- Scoring is confusing. If 500 is passing and the student gets 499, then what?

Ms. Suzanne Kaplan, National Board Certified Teacher, Dual Language Math, Sunnyside School district:

- Worried about special education and ELLs in math.
- What happens to students who don’t pass AIMS?
- Expressed concern with the possibility of a statewide curriculum. This takes creativity out of the teaching profession.
- Teacher morale/motivation comes down if students don’t achieve.
- What is a teachers' responsibility to parents of good students who don’t pass and have been in the system since Kindergarten?

Ms. Deborah Dimmett, National Board Certified Teacher, Sunnyside Unified School District, Arizona Education Association:

- Concerned about students who don't pass AIMS.
- Concerned the goal is to pass a test rather than teach materials.
- Encouraged the Board to consider using a portfolio format.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:55AM